

Rhonda K.

LEWIS CARROLL'S



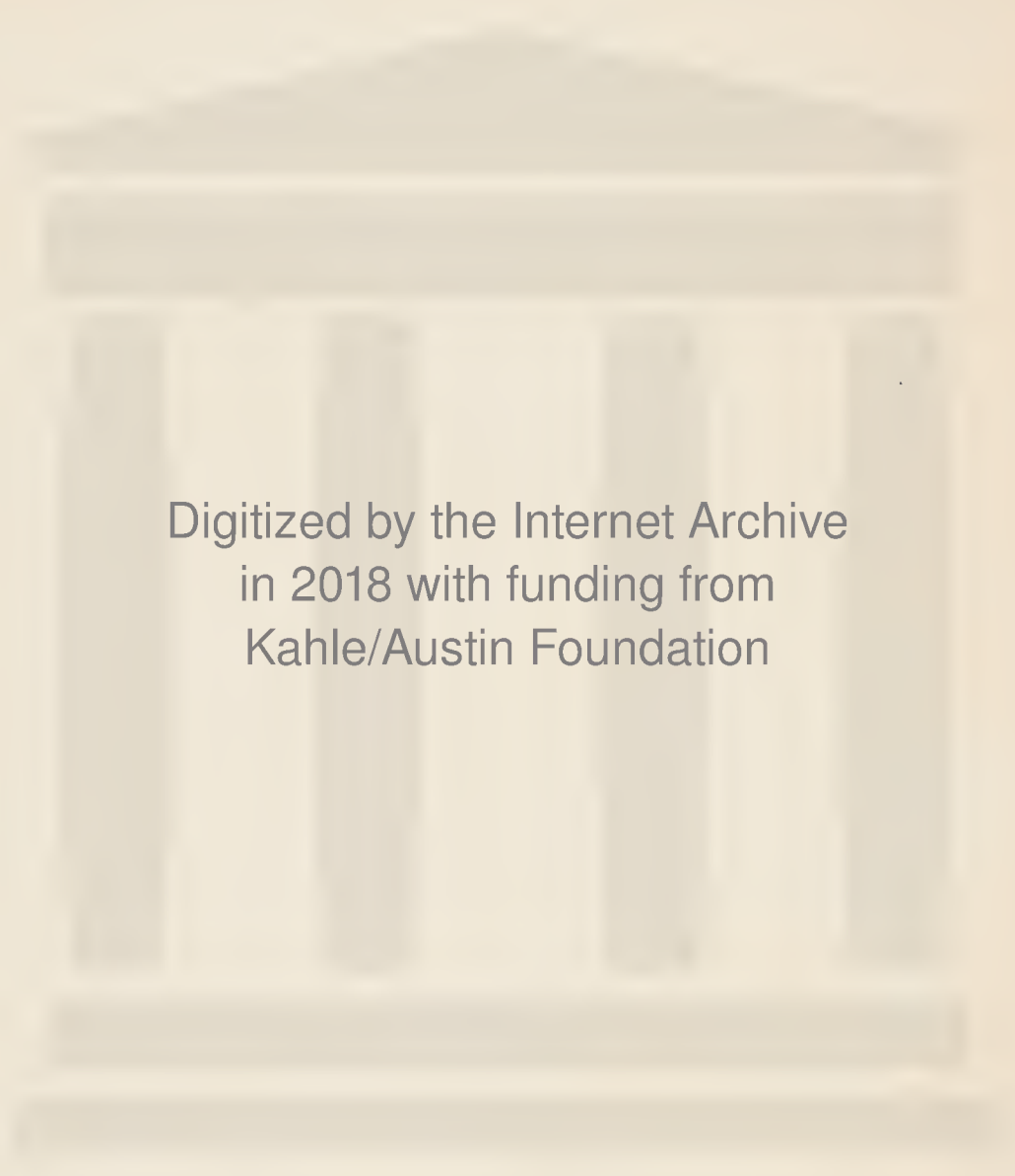
Alice in Wonderland

by

ANNE COULTER MARTENS



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY



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A Play in Two Acts

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(ALICE IN WONDERLAND)

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ALICE IN WONDERLAND

A Play in Two Acts

CHARACTERS

ALICE	MAD HATTER
CHESHIRE CAT	MARCH HARE
WHITE RABBIT	DORMOUSE
CATERPILLAR	TWEEDLEDUM
FROG FOOTMAN	TWEEDLEDEE
DUCHESS	HUMPTY DUMPTY
COOK	MOCK TURTLE
QUEEN OF HEARTS	GRYPHON
KING	SOLDIERS (three)
KNAVE	EXECUTIONER
COURTIER	GARDENERS (three)
LADIES (any number)	FLOWER-GIRLS (six)
HEART CHILDREN (any number)	PROP MEN

PLACE: *Wonderland*

TIME: *Afternoon, a little while ago.*

SYNOPSIS

Act One, Scene One: *Alice arrives, and meets some strange characters.*

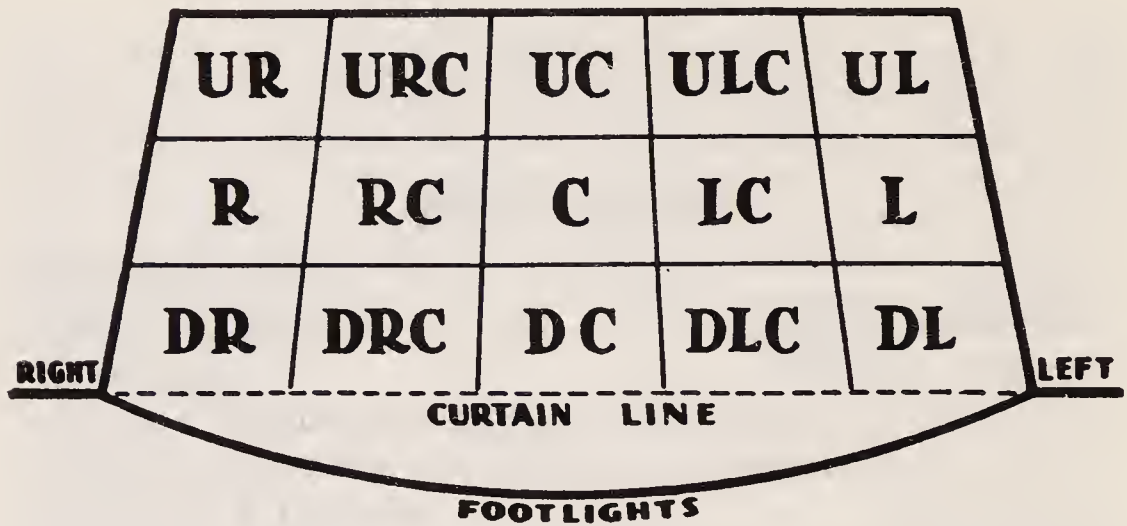
Scene Two: *She goes to the Mad Tea Party.*

Act Two, Scene One: *Alice plays croquet with the Queen.*

Scene Two: *There is a trial.*

*All parts except Alice, Duchess, Queen, King, Knave, and Executioner may be played by either male or female actors.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

ACT ONE

Scene One

This scene is played in front of the curtains after a Blackout. It shows the end of the Rabbit Hole. A large door which does not open is set directly in front of the closed curtains, C. It is painted white with a big red heart on it. At far DR a portion of a wall about four feet high, painted stone or brick, can be seen. Fastened to the left side of it is a lower stone-effect step. Unseen at this time is a similar step at the right side. A few stylized pieces of shrubbery may be used near the wall. A small table is at L with a key on it. Entrances are L, R, and C, through the curtains.

LIGHTS ON: The CHESHIRE CAT is curled up as if sleeping in front of the door. He gets up, stretches, and speaks to the audience.

CAT

I'm the Cheshire Cat. I knew you'd recognize me because I'm always grinning. You've heard the expression, "Grin and bear it"? Me, I grin and share it. Share what? The fun, of course. All the fun and excitement of Wonderland. We're going to have a visitor in a moment, a little girl named Alice who chased across the field after a White Rabbit till he

dived down his rabbit hole.

(Looks R)

Here comes the rabbit now!

(The WHITE RABBIT appears on the higher portion of the wall, which has a standing area such as a low table behind it. He carries a fan and white gloves)

RABBIT

Oh, dear, oh, dear, I wonder what time it is?

(Steps down onto the low step)

CAT

Overtime.

RABBIT

Then I'm late, and the Queen will be angry!

CAT

Isn't she always?

RABBIT

When that silly girl ran after me, I tumbled down here too fast.

(Brushes himself off. A bumpety-bump sound is heard offstage)

Now *she's* falling down!

(Goes to door C)

I hope the Queen doesn't find out.

CAT

Why?

RABBIT

She might blame *me*.

CAT

(To audience)

This must be Alice.

(Moves L)

(ALICE, in a pretty dress with a white pinafore, may appear to slide from behind the wall onto the lower step. If this can't be worked, she can just walk on brushing off her dress)

ALICE

Mr. Rabbit, wait for me!

(Bumps down to floor)

RABBIT

Oh, dear, oh, dear! The Queen doesn't *like* little girls!

(Goes quickly around the door and out through the curtains)

ALICE

He didn't wait!

(Gets up, brushing herself off)

CAT

Why should he? You haven't been properly introduced.

ALICE

I'm Alice.

CAT

And I'm the Cheshire Cat. You may call me Chessy.

ALICE

I like cats and Chessy is a nice name. Where am I?

I fell so far that I'm all mixed up.

CAT

(To audience)

Who isn't, these days?

(To ALICE)

Don't you really know?

ALICE

All I know is that I have to get back up to my sister. We were sitting on the grass playing a little card game when the White Rabbit went by.

CAT

If you chase after strange rabbits, you mustn't be surprised if strange things happen.

ALICE

I've never known a cat who could talk. My cat Dinah just purrs.

CAT

None of them can talk, where you come from.

ALICE

I wonder why.

CAT

There are lots of things here to wonder about. That's why this is called Wonderland.

ALICE

O-oh. Chessy, can you tell me how to get back to where I came from? My parents will be worried about me.

CAT

I don't have any family. Fortunately.

ALICE

Why do you say "fortunately"?

CAT

Because all the cream in the saucer is for me.

ALICE

I'm afraid you're rather selfish.

CAT

Isn't everybody?

ALICE

I don't *know* everybody.

CAT

I'll help you get acquainted.

ALICE

It's good of you to offer, but I really *must* go home.

CAT

Why?

ALICE

Today's my birthday, and my mother's baking a great big cake with pink icing, and all my friends are coming to my party at five o'clock.

CAT

Nobody ever gave a birthday party for me. Anyway, I don't care for pink icing.

ALICE

My cat Dinah likes it. I always give her some.

(Anxiously)

What time is it now?

CAT

About four, I think. Time doesn't matter much down here.

ALICE

It does to *me*. If I'm not back home by five o'clock, there won't *be* any party, and my mother and daddy will be sick with worry.

CAT

Too bad.

ALICE

And Dinah won't get any pink icing.

(Suddenly)

Oh, my goodness! Poor Dinah!

CAT

What now?

ALICE

She was taking a nap in my doll house this morning, and I closed the door. Nobody will know where she is, and she can't get out!

CAT

As I said before, too bad.

ALICE

(Indignantly)

Don't you *care*?

CAT

I have problems of my own.

ALICE

Oh, dear! What am I going to do?

(Stamps her foot.)

CAT

Don't stamp your foot at me. I might get nervous and go away.

(Turns his back on her)

ALICE

(Going to him)

No, no, don't leave me! I need your help.

CAT

Too bad.

ALICE

Stop saying that!

(More politely)

Will you please tell me which way I ought to go from here?

CAT

That depends on where you want to get to.

ALICE

Whichever way will take me home again. I don't much care.

CAT

Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

ALICE

As long as I get *somewhere*.

CAT

You're sure to do that if you walk long enough.

ALICE

What sort of people live around here?

CAT

Assorted sorts.

ALICE

Assorted, like in a box of tea cakes?

CAT

None of them are at all like tea cakes.

ALICE

Please don't be offended. I must get home in time for my birthday party, and let poor Dinah out of the doll house.

CAT

I must try having a birthday some time, if the Queen of Hearts will permit it.

ALICE

Nobody has to *permit* a birthday. It just happens.

CAT

Maybe where *you* come from.

ALICE

I don't think you're very friendly. *My* cat purrs.

CAT

Maybe you don't *think* at all.

ALICE

Would the Queen of Hearts help me? *She* sounds very kind-hearted.

CAT

First you jump down the rabbit hole, and now you're jumping to conclusions. Why should the Queen of

Hearts be kind-hearted?

ALICE

Because of her name.

CAT

Not a very sensible reason.

ALICE

(Looking at door)

Will I find her if I go through this door?

CAT

Maybe.

ALICE

(Trying the painted doorknob)

But it's locked!

CAT

Of course.

ALICE

(Looking around)

A key!

(Picks up key from table)

Is this the key?

CAT

It's *a* key.

ALICE

(Trying it on the painted keyhole)

It won't fit!

CAT

I could have told you that.

ALICE

Then how do I get through it?

CAT

Try going *around* it.

ALICE

Thank you.

(Pauses at side of door, about to go
around it)

You're not really unfriendly, after all.

CAT

After all what?

ALICE

You weren't very nice when I first came.

CAT

Because I don't make friends with just anybody.

ALICE

But I'm not just anybody. I'm Alice.

CAT

And I'm Chessy.

(Thoughtfully)

You know, I'm beginning to like you.

ALICE

Won't you come with me? I'd be glad to have someone to talk to.

CAT

That depends on what you want to talk about.

ALICE

How to get home again.

CAT

Then take that key along and don't lose it.

ALICE

(Studying key)

There's something special about this key?

CAT

Very special. It even has a name.

ALICE

Please help me to find the right door!

(Puts key in her pocket)

CAT

You'll have to find it yourself.

ALICE

(Disappointed)

And I thought you were my friend! I'll ask the Queen of Hearts.

CAT

You may be sorry if you do.

ALICE

I wish I knew why you grin all the time. Is something funny?

CAT

Everything's funny, if you can laugh at it.

ALICE

There's something strange about the way you keep watching me.

CAT

That's because I'm a watch cat.

ALICE

Did you say . . . watch cat?

CAT

Certainly. You've heard of watch *dog*, haven't you? Well, I happen to be a watch cat. Would you like me to watch over you?

ALICE

(Gratefully)

Oh, would you, please? I've never been away from home before.

CAT

I've never been a watch cat for a little girl before.

ALICE

Then we *are* friends?

(The CAT puts out a paw and ALICE shakes it)

CAT

You'll be seeing me around.

(As ALICE is about to go around the door, the Queen is heard shouting)

QUEEN

(Offstage)

Off with their heads!

ALICE

(Alarmed)

Who was that?

CAT

Don't ask. Just get going.

*Take wall
off stage
right*

(Two DIAMOND PROP MEN [or women] come in R and start moving the wall to offstage. Another one comes in L and picks up the table)

ALICE

(Surprised)

Things are moving so fast! I'm a little afraid . . .

CAT

Too afraid to find out what's on the other side of this door?

ALICE

(With determination)

Not if it helps me get back home again.

(Goes around the door and out C)

CAT

(To audience)

That's one of the reasons I grin. No one *ever* knows for sure what's on the other side of *any* door!

(Goes out C around door, and then out L)

enter door

(PROP MEN come in again and take the door away as the curtains part)

*center stage
take off right*

SCENE: A blue CATERPILLAR is sitting on a bench R, with a music pipe in his mouth. At C is a rocking chair, and at L a stool and a table on which are paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils. There are entrances at L and R. ALICE looks at the CATERPILLAR in surprise, but he ignores her. She walks around the bench, then

pauses and looks directly at him)

CATERPILLAR

(Languidly)

Who are *you*?

ALICE

My name is Alice, and I'm looking for the Queen of Hearts.

CATERPILLAR

Explain yourself.

ALICE

I can't explain myself, sir, because I'm feeling very mixed up, you see.

CATERPILLAR

I don't see.

ALICE

All this is very confusing.

CATERPILLAR

It isn't.

ALICE

Perhaps you haven't found it so. But when you turn into a chrysalis, and then into a butterfly, I think you'll feel it a bit queer, won't you?

CATERPILLAR

Not a bit.

ALICE

It would feel very queer to me.

CATERPILLAR

You! Who are *you*?

ALICE

I think you ought to tell me who *you* are.

CATERPILLAR

Why?

(With a sigh, ALICE turns away)

Come back!

(She goes back to him again)

I've something important to say.

ALICE

Yes?

CATERPILLAR

Keep your temper.

ALICE

(Annoyed)

Is that all?

CATERPILLAR

No.

(There is a pause)

So you feel confused, do you?

ALICE

Because my mother and daddy will be worried. And Dinah may not get anything to eat for days and days!

CATERPILLAR

Have you ever gone to school?

ALICE

Certainly.

CATERPILLAR

Then repeat a poem they taught you.

ALICE

(Considers, then recites)

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,

"And your hair has become very white;

And yet you incessantly stand on your head--

Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

(Distressed)

Dear me, it came out all wrong.

CATERPILLAR

Don't blame *me*.

(Puts his pipe in his mouth as if smoking)

ALICE

I've never seen a blue caterpillar before.

CATERPILLAR

It's a very good color, under the circumstances.

ALICE

What circumstances?

CATERPILLAR

I'm in a blue mood, you know.

ALICE

Excuse me, I didn't know.

CATERPILLAR

Some days I'm black.

ALICE

Oh, a black mood.

CATERPILLAR

Then again, I could be in a brown study. Or green with envy.

ALICE

How do you know when you're *you*?

CATERPILLAR

I'm always me.

ALICE

That's a pretty blue pipe.

CATERPILLAR

It plays blue notes. Surely you've heard of blue notes?

(He apparently plays a few "blue" notes on his pipe. This can be done offstage. Blue lights may play on him)

ALICE

(Politely)

I think I see.

CATERPILLAR

You mean, I think I *hear*.

ALICE

Yes, that's what I mean.

CATERPILLAR

You don't express yourself very well.

ALICE

I'm sorry. Will you please tell me where to find the Queen of Hearts?

CATERPILLAR

(Agitated)

I'm beginning to see red!

(Red lights may play on him as he gets down off the bench and crawls R)

ALICE

Why are you leaving?

CATERPILLAR

Because I value my head!

(Crawls out R)

ALICE

(Puzzled)

What did he mean by that?

*place door
in front of
bench.*

(As she watches him go, PROP MEN [or women] come in L carrying a white door with a red diamond on it, set it URC, and go out L. This may be the same door used earlier, with a diamond substituted for the heart. ALICE sees it when she turns around)

ALICE

Oh, a door!

(Takes key from her pocket and tries it on door)

It won't fit this one, either!

(The FROG FOOTMAN [or maid] comes in R carrying a very large letter sealed with a red heart. At the same time the COOK comes in L with a big pot and a large can marked "Pepper." She sets

the pot on the stool and begins stirring. Every now and then she picks up the can of pepper, shakes some into the pot, and sneezes)

ALICE

If you please, sir . . .

(The FOOTMAN stalks past her and knocks on the door. The knocking sound is made offstage)

COOK

(As she stirs)

Onions and pepper.

(Shakes some in)

Carrots and pepper.

(Shakes some)

Potatoes and pepper.

(Shakes more and sneezes. The FOOTMAN knocks again)

Oh, folderdash and pepperhash!

(Leaves pot and goes C)

What do *you* want?

FOOTMAN

For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.

(Hands her the letter and bows low)

COOK

(Grumpily)

The Duchess is busy.

(Props letter against stool and stirs the pot again)

(The DUCHESS, a pretty but stern woman, wearing an evening gown and with a

coronet in her hair, comes in L carrying a baby [a large doll] in a long white dress and a white bonnet which hides its pig mask. She sits in the chair and rocks as the baby screams. This scream may come from offstage. When ALICE turns around she sees the FOOTMAN sitting down at R)

ALICE

Why are you sitting down?

FOOTMAN

I don't like to sit up.

ALICE

Is that the Duchess? I'd like to talk to her.

FOOTMAN

There's no sort of use in knocking, if you expect *me* to open the door for you. First, because I'm on the same side of it as you are.

ALICE

But, really . . .

FOOTMAN

Secondly, because they're making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you.

(The baby screams again and the COOK throws a paper plate at it)

ALICE

(Covering her ears)

Oh, my!

FOOTMAN

There might be some sense in your knocking if we

had the door between us. For instance, if you were *inside*, you might knock and I could let you out.

ALICE

Yes, but----

FOOTMAN

I shall sit here till tomorrow . . .

(A plate thrown by the COOK skims by his head, followed by a cup)

Or the next day, maybe . . . I may sit here on and off, for days and days, if I happen to feel like it.

(Begins to whistle)

ALICE

Oh, there's no use talking to you!

(Another plate skims by his head and he jumps up)

FOOTMAN

But I don't happen to feel like it!

(Goes out R)

ALICE

I'll go in *without* knocking!

(Goes C as the COOK uses more pepper and sneezes)

Excuse me, but there's too much pepper in that soup.

COOK

Nobody asked *your* opinion.

(The CAT comes in L)

ALICE

(Pleased)

Chessy! I'm so glad to see you.

CAT

Better talk to the Duchess now.
(Lies down D C)

ALICE

(To the DUCHESS)

Why does your cook use so much pepper?

DUCHESS

Because of her disposition.

(Sneezes, and the baby cries)

Pig!

(To ALICE)

You don't know much, and that's a fact.

ALICE

I'll soon know more, because I'm a whole year older today than I was yesterday.

DUCHESS

Impossible.

ALICE

Today's my birthday.

DUCHESS

And the moral of that is, "Save the days and the weeks will take care of themselves."

(Shakes the baby)

ALICE

I don't think it *has* a moral.

DUCHESS

Tut, tut, child! Everything's got a moral if only you can find it.

ALICE

(Looking at CAT)

A very nice cat.

DUCHESS

The moral of that is, "Birds of a feather flock together."

ALICE

Only a cat isn't a bird.

DUCHESS

What a clear way you have of putting things!

ALICE

Your words are more confusing than mine.

DUCHESS

And the moral of that is, "The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours."

ALICE

Of my--what?

DUCHESS

I quite agree with you. And the moral of that is, "Be what you would seem to be." Or--if you'd like it put more simply--

(She speaks slowly and with clarity)

--"Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were is not otherwise."

ALICE

I could understand that better if you wrote it down.

DUCHESS

That's nothing to what I could say if I chose.

ALICE

Please don't trouble yourself.

DUCHESS

No trouble at all! I make you a present of everything I've said.

ALICE

Why . . . thank you.

DUCHESS

You're thinking about something, my dear. I can't tell you just now what the moral is, but I'll remember it in a bit.

ALICE

I've a right to think.

DUCHESS

Did the Queen give you permission?

ALICE

I haven't met her yet. Can you tell me where she is?

DUCHESS

She'll soon be playing croquet. And so will I, if I can get rid of this little . . .

(Glares at baby, who screams)

Pig!

(The COOK throws a utensil at it)

ALICE

Oh, please don't!

(The COOK throws another article)

You'll hit his precious nose!

DUCHESS

If everybody minded their own business, the world would go 'round a deal faster than it does.

ALICE

But the earth takes twenty-four hours to turn around on its axis, and----

DUCHESS

Talking of axes, have you met the Queen's Executioner?

ALICE

(Intent on what she is saying)

Twenty-four hours, I think, or is it twelve?

(The words now register)

Executioner?

DUCHESS

That's what I said.

ALICE

But why does the Queen need an Executioner?

DUCHESS

You're rather a dull-witted child. And the moral of that is, "The duller the axe, the harder the whacks."

(Spanks the baby, tosses it up and down in the air, and continues, in a sing-song voice)

Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes:
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases.

DUCHESS, COOK and BABY

Wow! Wow! Wow!

DUCHESS

I speak severely to my boy,
And beat him when he sneezes;
For he can thoroughly enjoy
The pepper when he pleases!

DUCHESS, COOK and BABY

Wow! Wow! Wow!

ALICE

What a strange way to treat a baby!

DUCHESS

Pig!

(To ALICE)

Here, you may hold him if you like.

(Gets up, giving baby to ALICE)

I must get ready to play croquet with the Queen.

(Goes L)

ALICE

May I go, too?

DUCHESS

If you have any sense, you'll keep out of her way.

(She goes out L. The COOK throws
a utensil after her, then picks up her
pot of soup and goes out L)

CAT

Good riddance!

(Gets up)

ALICE

Chessy, I *am* going to that croquet game.

CAT

I suppose it's no use telling you not to?

ALICE

No use at all, because I need help from the Queen.
Should I take the baby with me? They don't treat
him very well.

(The baby grunts)

CAT

He's used to it.

ALICE

(To baby)

Don't make such funny noises, dear.

(To CAT)

Or do you think he was only crying?

CAT

In his own way.

ALICE

(As the baby grunts again)

He sounds just like a pig.

(Pushes back the bonnet to look more
closely)

Oh, my goodness, he *is* a pig!

(The baby grunts, and she hastily puts
him on the rocking chair)

CAT

Of course.

ALICE

I think I ought to get started.

CAT

In *that* direction lives a Hatter.

(Points L)

And in *that* direction lives a March Hare.

(Points R)

ALICE

But I want to go to the croquet ground.

CAT

Visit either one you like, they're both mad.

ALICE

I don't think I care to meet them.

CAT

Everybody's a little bit mad, you know.

ALICE

Not you!

CAT

Sometimes I wonder. . . .

ALICE

I'm not mad, either. I just want to get home as fast as I can.

CAT

Then you'll have to try a lot harder.

(Goes out L)

ALICE

(Distressed)

Don't go away and leave me!

(Takes key from her pocket and looks at it)

I am trying. What do I do with this key?

CURTAIN

ACT ONE

Scene Two

The first part of this scene is played in front of the curtains, and is optional. If omitted, begin with the Tea Party on the main set.

LIGHTS ON: The wall (used in first scene) is L C and HUMPTY DUMPTY is sitting on it. (A table of the same height as the wall is behind it to provide seating space.) At R are several FLOWER-GIRLS in bright flower pots (plastic baskets or buckets) which come close to their knees. They are: PINK, BLUE, WHITE, YELLOW, ROSE and VIOLET. The CAT comes in L and pauses beside HUMPTY DUMPTY.

CAT

Hello, there! Is the Queen around?

HUMPTY

(Dolefully)

Don't talk about *round*. I have a wait problem.

CAT

Weight problem? Maybe you've been eating too much.

HUMPTY

I didn't say weight problem. I said wait problem.

CAT

So did I.

HUMPTY

I sit here on the wall *waiting*, because I have a feeling that something's going to happen.

CAT

Something good?

HUMPTY

I have to wait and find out.

CAT

It might be safer if you'd wait on a lower step.

HUMPTY

I like the view from up here.

CAT

What do you *think* is going to happen?

HUMPTY

I haven't the faintest idea. But the King has promised to send aid if ever I need it.

CAT

How about the Queen?

HUMPTY

What about her?

CAT

Never mind.

(Walks C and speaks to the audience)

Maybe you've noticed that the Queen isn't very popular? Maybe you've even guessed *why*. Some peo-

ple have a sharp tongue, but with the Queen, it's more than that. But I'll keep a watchful eye on Alice if I can.

(Goes toward the FLOWERS)

Hello, girls.

(The FLOWERS giggle)

Everything going well with you?

(They giggle again)

At transplanting time you'll have to move.

(They nod)

So you're waiting, too.

(They nod and giggle)

And you all look very pretty.

(They lower their heads bashfully.

The CAT goes R)

HUMPTY

Where are you going?

CAT

Off.

HUMPTY

Off where?

CAT

Just off. Sometimes I go on and sometimes I go off. Sometimes I go up, and sometimes I come down.

(Goes out R. The FLOWERS giggle)

HUMPTY

Will you girls stop that silly giggling? It makes me feel on edge.

CAT

(Putting his head in R, to audience)

He *is* on edge!

(Goes out)

(ALICE comes in L. She pauses beside HUMPTY DUMPTY and looks at him in surprise)

ALICE

Is this the way to the Queen?

HUMPTY

Weigh! I hate that word. And it's very rude to stare.

ALICE

I beg your pardon, sir, but you look so much like an egg.

HUMPTY

It's very provoking to be called an egg. Very

ALICE

Some eggs are very pretty.

HUMPTY

Some people have no more sense than a baby!
(The FLOWERS giggle)

ALICE

(Surprised at this)

Oh, my!

HUMPTY

Stop gawking. State your name and your business.

ALICE

My name is Alice.

HUMPTY

A stupid name. What does it mean?

ALICE

Must a name mean something?

HUMPTY

My name means the shape I am, and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape.

ALICE

Why do you sit all alone on the wall?

HUMPTY

Because there's nobody beside me! Did you think I didn't know the answer to that? Ask another.

ALICE

Don't you think you're up pretty high?

HUMPTY

What easy riddles you ask! Of course I don't think so. Why, if I ever *did* fall off--which there's no chance of--but *if* I did fall, the King has made me a promise.

ALICE

To send all his horses and all his men.

HUMPTY

(Annoyed)

How did you know? I declare, you've been listening at doors and behind trees and down chimneys, or you couldn't have known it.

ALICE

I haven't, indeed! It's in a book.

HUMPTY

(Pleased)

That proves I'm very important.

ALICE

It proves that *some* day----

HUMPTY

Let's go back to the last remark but one.

ALICE

I'm afraid I can't quite remember it.

HUMPTY

In that case it's my turn to choose a subject. So here's a question for you. How old did you say you were?

ALICE

Well, yesterday I was . . . but today's my birthday, so . . .

HUMPTY

Wrong! You never said a word like it.

ALICE

I thought you meant, "How old *are* you?"

HUMPTY

If I'd meant that, I've have said it.

ALICE

I didn't mean to start an argument.

HUMPTY

You look like an uncomfortable sort of age.

ALICE

It suits *me*. What a beautiful belt you have on!

(Hastily)

Or maybe it's a tie. I find it hard to tell which is your neck and which is your waist.

HUMPTY

It's a most provoking thing when a person doesn't know the difference.

ALICE

I'm very sorry.

HUMPTY

It was given to me by the King for an unbirthday present.

ALICE

What *is* an unbirthday present?

HUMPTY

A present given when it isn't your birthday.

ALICE

I like birthday presents best.

HUMPTY

How many days are there in a year?

ALICE

Three hundred and sixty-five.

HUMPTY

And how many birthdays have you?

ALICE

One.

HUMPTY

And if you take one from three hundred and sixty-five, what remains?

ALICE

Three hundred and sixty-four.

HUMPTY

That shows that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get unbirthdays presents.

ALICE

Certainly.

(Sits on lower step, looking up at him)

HUMPTY

And only *one* for birthday presents. There's glory for you!

ALICE

I don't know what you mean by "glory."

HUMPTY

I meant, "There's a nice knock-down argument for you."

ALICE

But "glory" doesn't mean a nice knock-down argument.

HUMPTY

When *I* use a word it means just what I choose it to mean.

ALICE

The question is whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.

HUMPTY

The question is, which is to be master, that's all.

(The FLOWERS giggle)

Quiet, you silly flowers!

(To ALICE)

Words have a temper, particularly verbs. Adjectives you can do anything with. However, *I* can manage the whole lot of them. Impenetrability! That what *I* say.

ALICE

Would you tell me, please, what that means?

HUMPTY

That we've had enough of that subject, and you'd better tell me what you plan to do next, as I suppose you don't intend to stay here the rest of your life.

ALICE

That's a great deal to make one word mean.

HUMPTY

When I make a word do a lot of work, I always pay it extra.

ALICE

(Puzzled)

Oh.

(Gets up)

I'm going to visit the mad Hatter and ask *him* how to find the croquet ground.

HUMPTY

Good-by.

(Extends one finger carefully and
ALICE shakes it)

ALICE

Till we meet again.

HUMPTY

I wouldn't know you again. You're so exactly like other people.

ALICE

The face is what you go by, generally.

HUMPTY

Your face is the same as everybody has. Now, if you had your eyes on the same side of the nose, for instance, or your mouth at the top, that would be some help.

ALICE

It wouldn't look nice.

(HUMPTY folds his arms and ignores her. The FLOWERS giggle and she walks toward them)

Such lovely flowers! I wish you could talk.

PINK

We *can* talk, when there's anybody worth talking to.

WHITE

It isn't manners for us to begin, you know.

YELLOW

Really, I was wondering when you'd speak. I said to myself, "Her face has *some* sense to it, though it's not a clever one."

ROSE

If only her petals curled up a little more, she'd be all right.

VIOLET

You're an awkward shape, and your petals are begin-

ning to fade.

ALICE

Nothing of the sort!

VIOLET

(Offended)

Did you hear her contradict me? It's enough to make me wither!

ALICE

I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. But I'm getting so tired of being criticized.

PINK

Then why don't you change?

BLUE

She'd make a fair-enough daisy, don't you think?
(The other FLOWERS nod)

ALICE

Why are you planted all in a row?

WHITE

We'll have a different pattern when we're transplanted.

YELLOW

Like this, maybe.

(The FLOWERS pick up their flower pots and form themselves in a design)

ROSE

Or maybe like this.

(They form a circle)

VIOLET

What fun!

(They all giggle. If desired, they may do a little dance, forming different patterns)

ALICE

I wish you'd stand still a minute.

FLOWERS

Why?

(They form themselves in a row again)

ALICE

Because maybe you can tell me where to find the Queen.

PINK

(Faintly)

I'm beginning to feel pale.

BLUE

I'm wilting!

(Bends forward)

ALICE

(Straightening her)

Are you *afraid* of her?

WHITE

If she should pick us . . .

YELLOW

We'd *all* lose our heads!

(A GARDENER, who is the Seven of Spades, comes in R)

GARDENER

(Briskly)

Transplanting time, girls! Pick up your flower pots, and let's go.

(The FLOWERS pick up their flower pots and go out R, followed by the GARDENER)

HUMPTY

Now they can giggle some place else.

(Begins rocking back and forth on the wall)

ALICE

Why are you rocking back and forth?

HUMPTY

Too much silly conversation makes me dizzy.

(Rocks faster)

ALICE

Oh, dear, you'll fall!

(Watches him nervously)

I'd better call someone.

HUMPTY

Send for the King's men!

ALICE

(Calling)

Help, help!

(HUMPTY continues to rock. The sound of galloping horses is heard offstage, and then three Club SOLDIERS run in from L carrying a stretcher. One may be the same as the Spade Gardener with a different "sandwich board." DIAMOND

PROP MEN may come in if needed.
They group in front of the wall and
HUMPTY tumbles onto the stretch-
er)

ALICE

Did you catch him in time?

SOLDIER

All he needs is a little patching up.

HUMPTY

(As they carry him L)

I hope my cracks won't show!

(They take him out)

(PROP MEN come in and take the wall
and the table out R)

ALICE

Things are moving again! Chessy, where are you?
Chessy!

(The curtains part and she finds her-
self at the mad Tea Party. There is
a long table with a tablecloth which
reaches the floor at C. It is set with
cups, saucers and plates, and a very
large teapot. Chairs are all around
the table. The same white door, with
a large Ace of Clubs on it, is U.L.
The MAD HATTER and the MARCH
HARE are crowded together at one
corner of the table, with the DORMOUSE
between them. ALICE goes toward
them)

HATTER

No room, no room!

ALICE

There's *plenty* of room!

(Notices door)

But first may I see if this key fits your door?

(Takes key from her pocket and goes to door)

HARE

It's not *our* door.

HATTER

Belongs to some old clubhouse. But the club broke up.

HARE

Because everybody went mad and quit.

ALICE

Don't you mean, everybody got angry and quit?

HATTER

Of course not.

ALICE

(Trying to put key in lock)

Oh, dear! Still the wrong door!

HARE

Maybe you have the wrong key.

ALICE

It *has* to be this key.

(Sighs, puts key in her pocket, and sits down in an arm chair at one end of table)

HARE

Have some wine.

ALICE

(Looking at table)

I don't see any wine.

HARE

There isn't any.

ALICE

Then it wasn't very polite of you to offer it.

HARE

It wasn't very polite of you to sit down without being invited.

ALICE

I didn't know it was *your* table. It's set for a great many more than three.

HATTER

Your hair needs cutting.

ALICE

You shouldn't make personal remarks. It's very rude.

HATTER

Why is a raven like a writing desk?

ALICE

Oh, a riddle! I believe I can guess that.

HARE

Do you mean you think you can find out the answer to it?

ALICE

Yes.

HARE

Then you should say what you mean.

ALICE

I do. At least, I mean what I say. That's the same thing.

HATTER

Not the same thing a bit! Why, you might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see."

HARE

You might just as well say that "I like what I get" is the same thing as "I get what I like."

DORMOUSE

(sleepily)

You might just as well say that "I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe."

HATTER

It *is* the same thing with you.

(To ALICE)

What day of the month is it?

(Takes a large watch from his pocket,
shakes it, and holds it to his ear)

ALICE

The fourth.

HATTER

(Sighing)

Two days wrong!

(Angrily, to HARE)

I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!

HARE

It was the *best* butter.

HATTER

Some crumbs must have got in. You shouldn't have put it in with a bread knife.

(The HARE takes the watch and dips it into his cup of tea, then looks at it again and sighs)

HARE

It was the *best* butter, you know.

ALICE

What a funny watch! It tells the day of the month and doesn't tell what time it is.

HATTER

Why should it? Does *your* watch tell what year it is?

ALICE

Of course not. But that's because it stays the same year for such a long time.

HATTER

Which is just the case with *mine*.

ALICE

I don't quite understand you.

HATTER

The Dormouse is asleep again.

(Pours a little tea on the DORMOUSE)

DORMOUSE

Of course, of course. Just what I was going to remark myself.

HATTER

Have you guessed the riddle yet?

ALICE

No, I give up. What's the answer?

HATTER

I haven't the slightest idea.

HARE

Nor I.

ALICE

I think you might do something better with the time than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers.

HATTER

If you knew Time as well as I do, you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *him*.

HARE

I dare say you never even spoke to Time.

ALICE

I know how to beat time in music.

HATTER

Ah, that accounts for it. He won't stand beating. If you kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock.

ALICE

Is that the way you manage?

HATTER

(Sadly)

Not I! We quarreled last March--just before *he* went mad.

(Points to the HARE)

HARE

Who went mad?

(Points to the HATTER)

HATTER

It was at the concert given by the Queen of Hearts and I had to sing.

ALICE

(Eagerly)

Will you take me to meet the Queen?

HARE

We're not *that* mad.

HATTER

Perhaps you know my song?

(Sings in sing-song)

Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!

ALICE

I've heard something like it.

HATTER

(Singing)

Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea-tray in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle----

DORMOUSE

(Joining in sleepily)

Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle----

(The HATTER and the HARE pinch him)

Ou-ouch!

HATTER

I'd hardly finished the first verse when the Queen yelled, "He's murdering the time!"

(Sadly)

And ever since then he won't do a thing I ask. It's always tea time now.

ALICE

Is that the reason so many tea things are put out here?

HATTER

We've no time to wash the dishes.

ALICE

Then you keep moving around, I suppose?

HATTER

Exactly so, as the things get used up.

ALICE

But what happens when you come to the beginning again?

HARE

Take some more tea.

ALICE

I've had nothing yet, so I can't take more.

HATTER

You mean you can't take *less*. It's very easy to take *more* than nothing.

ALICE

Nobody asked *your* opinion.

HATTER

Who's making personal remarks now? I want a clean cup. Let's all move one place on.

(They shake the DORMOUSE awake and all move one place. ALICE has the HARE'S place now)

HARE

Dormouse, tell us a story! Wake up!

(They pinch him again)

DORMOUSE

Ou-ouch! I wasn't asleep.

(Quickly)

Once upon a time there were three little sisters who were learning to draw. They drew everything that begins with an M.

ALICE

Why with an M?

HARE

Why not?

DORMOUSE

Such as mousetraps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness--you know you say things are "Much of a muchness," but did you ever see a drawing of a muchness?

ALICE

Really, now you ask me, I don't think----

HATTER

Then you shouldn't talk.

ALICE

(Getting up indignantly)

This is the stupidest tea party I was at in all my life!

HARE

The dormouse is asleep again!

DORMOUSE

I'm not!

(They try to push his head into the teapot)

ALICE

Don't put his head in the teapot!

HATTER

He likes tea.

(Two Club SOLDIERS come marching in L)

SOLDIERS

The Queen approaches!

HARE

Hide before she sees you!

ALICE

But I want to meet her.

HATTER

That *proves* you're mad!

HATTER, HARE and DORMOUSE

The Queen!

(They jump up and stand at attention in front of the table. ALICE lines up with them)

(The SOLDIERS march to R. A COUR-TIER and three LADIES of Diamonds come in L. They go R)

HARE

Here she comes now!

HATTER

My knees are shaking!

DORMOUSE

(Still half asleep)

Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle----

HARE and HATTER

(Pinching him)

Shut up!

(The QUEEN OF HEARTS comes in L, followed by the KING and the KNAVE. All bow low to them)

ALICE

(Stepping forward)

Please, your majesty----

QUEEN

How did *you* get here?

ALICE

My name is Alice, and I came here by mistake.
Will you kindly tell me how to get home again?

QUEEN

I don't like your face.

ALICE

I'm sorry, your majesty, but . . .

QUEEN

Come to the croquet ground. That's an order!

KING

Maybe she doesn't know how to play.

QUEEN

Then she'd better learn in a hurry!

FIRST LADY

(Curtsying)

Your majesty, did you bake cherry tarts today?

QUEEN

Certainly. I'll eat them after the game.

(At the mention of tarts, the KNAVE
reacts. Now he goes out R)

Where is that Knave going?

COURTIER

(Bowing)

Maybe he forgot something.

QUEEN

Idiot! Everybody follow me to the croquet ground!

(The HATTER, HARE and DORMOUSE
follow as the procession begins to march
off R. ALICE waits, hesitating)

KING

My dear, I think the soldiers are out of step.

QUEEN

Off with their heads!

(All go out but ALICE)

ALICE

(Distressed)

Oh, dear, she isn't kind-hearted at all!

(The head of the CAT appears on the upstage side of the table. He has been hidden by the long tablecloth)

CAT

Who said she was?

ALICE

(Surprised)

Chessy! But where's the rest of you?

CAT

Resting, of course.

ALICE

I'm not used to talking to just a head.

CAT

It's my head that does my talking. *Can you play croquet?*

ALICE

Not very well.

CAT

Good, because the Queen wants to win the game.

ALICE

And I want to get home by five o'clock for my birthday party.

(Goes closer to him)

Oh, Chessy, that's not the really important reason. I want to go home because my mother will be crying, and poor Dinah will be hungry.

CAT

Do I see tears in your eyes?

ALICE

(In a low voice)

Maybe.

(Puts her hands up to her face)

CAT

Come, now, that's no way to solve a problem.

ALICE

I . . . just can't help it. I do miss them so!

CAT

Even when you're feeling sad inside, it always helps to smile. So head up, and let's see a great big smile

(ALICE drops her hands, raises her head, and tries to smile)

Bigger than that!

(Her smile grows wider)

Now you've got it. Keep smiling, and never, never give up.

ALICE

I'll try. The Queen didn't answer my question, so I'll just have to ask her again.

CAT

My advice is to ask *yourself*. Maybe *you* can find

the answer.

ALICE

Don't I wish I could!

(The EXECUTIONER, a Ten of Clubs, comes in L with an axe over his shoulder. ALICE steps back in alarm)

ALICE

Who is *he*?

(The EXECUTIONER marches out R. As ALICE watches him go, the CAT'S head goes down under the table. She turns back to him and cries in dismay)

Chessy, where are you?

(If the infra-red spot is used, there is a blackout, and a huge Grin appears high over the table. If not, a painted Grin is held high)

CAT

Right here.

ALICE

If you disappear entirely, I won't have a friend left!

CAT

Don't forget, I'm a watch cat.

ALICE

Please watch over me, Chessy. I'm afraid of the Queen!

CAT

Who isn't?

ALICE

(Wonderingly)

I've often seen a cat without a grin, but I've never
seen a grin without a cat!

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene One

The first part of this scene is optional. It is played in front of the curtains after a blackout. If omitted, begin with the croquet ground on the main set.

LIGHTS ON: TWEEDLEDEE and TWEEDLEDUM, plump and dressed alike, stand near a piece of shrubbery with their arms around each other's neck. Under the shrubbery is a broken rattle. Behind them, on the ground, is an old-fashioned umbrella, folded. At L a pile of articles: two pillows, two pieces of rope, two household items such as feather dusters, and a saucepan and a pail. They remain very still. ALICE comes in L.

ALICE

Excuse me, but is this the right way to the Queen's croquet ground?

(They make no reply)

Are there any doors here?

(No answer)

I don't believe they can speak!

TWEEDLEDUM

If you think we're waxworks, you ought to pay. Waxworks weren't made to be looked at for nothing. Nohow!

TWEEDLEDEE

Contrariwise, if you think we're alive, you ought to address us by name.

ALICE

You remind me of an old song, and I can't help saying the words:

Tweedledum and Tweedledee
Agreed to have a battle;
For Tweedledum said Tweedledee
Had spoiled his nice new rattle.

TWEEDLEDUM

It isn't so, nohow.

TWEEDLEDEE

Contrariwise, if it was so, it might be. And if it were so, it would be. But as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic.

ALICE

But I did guess your names?

(They nod solemnly)

And you didn't tell me how to get to the croquet ground.

TWEEDLEDUM

Nohow.

TWEEDLEDEE

Contrariwise.

TWEEDLEDUM

You've begun wrong. The first thing in a visit is to say, "How d'ye do" and shake hands.

(He and TWEEDLEDEE extend their free hands. ALICE extends a hand to each of them, music starts, and they

all dance around in a circle. Just as suddenly, they stop)

TWEEDLEDEE

That's enough for one dance.

ALICE

I hope you're not tired?

TWEEDLEDUM

Nohow. And thank you for asking.

TWEEDLEDEE

So much obliged. Do you like poetry?

ALICE

(Doubtfully)

Ye-es. But I have to be going along now.

TWEEDLEDUM

Let's say "The Walrus and the Carpenter" for her.

TWEEDLEDEE

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand.
They wept like anything to see

TWEEDLEDUM

Such quantities of sand:
"If this were only cleared away,"
They said, "It would be grand!"

ALICE

If it's very long, would you please----

TWEEDLEDEE

"If seven maids with seven mops

Swept it for half a year,
Do you suppose, " the Walrus said,

TWEEDLEDUM

"That they could get it clear?"
"I doubt it, " said the Carpenter,
And shed a bitter tear.

TWEEDLEDEE

"The time has come, " the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing wax--

TWEEDLEDUM

Of cabbages--and kings--
And why the sea is boiling hot--
And whether pigs have wings. "

ALICE

(Quickly)

Thank you so much, it was lovely.

TWEEDLEDEE

It's not finished yet.

ALICE

You can finish it some other time.

TWEEDLEDUM

Nohow.

TWEEDLEDEE

Contrariwise.

TWEEDLEDUM

Anyway, it wasn't about a real Walrus.

TWEEDLEDEE

Maybe it's all a part of your dream.

ALICE

I'm not dreaming!

TWEEDLEDUM

Then maybe *we* are, and you're not real at all.

TWEEDLEDEE

If we should wake up, you'd go out--bang!--just like a candle.

ALICE

I *am* real!

(Upset, she dabs at her eyes with her handkerchief)

TWEEDLEDUM

You won't make yourself a bit realer by crying.

ALICE

If I weren't real I wouldn't be able to cry.

TWEEDLEDEE

Do you think those are *real* tears?

ALICE

You're talking nonsense!

(Looks up)

The sky is clouding over; I wonder if it's going to rain?

(TWEEDLEDUM opens the large umbrella and holds it over himself and his brother)

TWEEDLEDUM

No, I don't think it is. At least, not under *here*.

Nohow.

ALICE

But it may rain outside?

TWEEDLEDEE

It may if it chooses. We've no objection. Contrariwise.

ALICE

But *I* might get wet.

TWEEDLEDUM

You shouldn't think so much about yourself.

(Suddenly he dashes from under the umbrella and picks up the broken rattle. Furiously)

Do you see *that*?

ALICE

(Examining it)

It's only a rattle, quite old and worn.

TWEEDLEDUM

(Stamping about)

It's spoiled, of course!

(Looks at TWEEDLEDEE, who quickly sits down and tries to hide himself under the umbrella)

He did it!

ALICE

(Trying to restrain TWEEDLEDUM)

You shouldn't be so angry about an old rattle.

TWEEDLEDUM

But it *isn't* old. It's new! My nice new rattle!

(TWEEDLEDEE stands up and tries to

close the umbrella over himself)

ALICE

Don't be so angry--please!

(TWEEDLEDEE loses his balance and falls to the ground)

TWEEDLEDUM

(Bending over him)

Of course you agree to have a battle?

(Pulls the umbrella away, folding it up)

TWEEDLEDEE

(Sulkily)

I suppose. If *she* gets us ready.

(They point to the articles at L)

ALICE

All right, if you *must* have a battle.

(Ties a pillow around each of them, puts the pan and pail on their heads, and hands them each a feather duster)

TWEEDLEDUM

(As she does this)

Our armor.

TWEEDLEDEE

Our helmets.

TWEEDLEDUM

And our swords.

ALICE

Such a silly thing to fight about!

TWEEDLEDUM

I wouldn't mind so much if it hadn't been a new one.

Nohow.

TWEEDLEDEE

I didn't mean to step on it. Contrariwise.

TWEEDLEDUM

You did it on purpose!

TWEEDLEDEE

I didn't!

TWEEDLEDUM

(To ALICE)

Do I look very pale?

ALICE

(Peering under the bucket helmet)

A little.

TWEEDLEDUM

(Holding his helmet so it doesn't cover
his face)

I'm very brave, generally. Only now I have a head-
ache.

TWEEDLEDEE

(Holding his helmet up also)

I've got a toothache!

ALICE

Then you'd better not fight today.

TWEEDLEDUM

And have *him* think I'm a coward?

TWEEDLEDEE

And have *him* think I'm a coward?

ALICE

I'm sure you're both very brave.

TWEEDLEDUM

What's the time now?

TWEEDLEDEE

After four, I think.

TWEEDLEDUM

Let's fight till five, and then have tea.

(They begin their battle, missing each other because they can't see with their "helmets" down over their eyes. ALICE keeps dodging out of their way. The CAT comes in R)

CAT

I take my eye off you for one minute, and you get lost!

ALICE

Don't scold me, Chessy. I must have taken the wrong turning.

(TWEEDLEDUM and TWEEDLEDEE, tired, lean against each other a moment to rest)

CAT

Remember, whatever happens, don't offend the Queen.

ALICE

I'll certainly try not to.

CAT

Or--!

(Makes a cutting motion at his head)

ALICE

(Alarmed)

Oh, my!

(TWEEDLEDUM and TWEEDLEDEE resume their battle with increased fury. Finally they make a wild dash at the same time, bump into each other, and fall down flat)

ALICE

(Going to them)

Are you hurt?

(TWEEDLEDUM and TWEEDLEDEE get up, face each other, and shake hands solemnly)

TWEEDLEDUM

A good fight, Dee.

TWEEDLEDEE

A good fight, Dum.

TWEEDLEDUM

Shall we go for our tea now?

TWEEDLEDEE

I'm ready. But tomorrow I'll knock your head off.

TWEEDLEDUM

Nohow. Tomorrow I'll knock *your* head off.

TWEEDLEDEE

Contrariwise.

(They bow to each other and their heads bump together. Moaning a little, they go

out L, each holding a hand to his head)

(PROP MEN come and remove the umbrella and the piece of shrubbery)

ALICE

I never did see such a strange fight.

CAT

Call that strange? Wait till you see the Queen's croquet game!

(Goes out through the curtains and takes a position behind the wall in the next scene)

ALICE

Why don't you *wait* for me? Oh, dear, he's always disappearing!

(The curtains part to reveal the croquet ground. The wall is U C, without the table behind it this time. Above and to the left of it is a rose tree with several white roses on it. Three GARDENERS --the Five, Two and Seven of Spades-- are beside the rose tree with paint buckets and brushes, painting the flowers red. At U R is a white door with a large Ace of Spades on it)

TWO

Look out now, Five! Don't go splashing paint over me like that.

FIVE

I couldn't help it. Seven jogged my elbow.

SEVEN

Always lay the blame on others!

(ALICE goes toward them and watches curiously)

FIVE

You'd better not talk! I heard the Queen say only yesterday you deserved to be beheaded.

TWO

What for?

SEVEN

That's none of your business, Two!

FIVE

For talking to the Cheshire Cat. The Queen doesn't like the way he grins at her.

(ALICE has her back toward the wall. The head of the CAT appears above it briefly, then goes down again)

TWO

If he's smart, he'll keep out of sight.

ALICE

He was with me a little while ago, but now I don't know where he is.

SEVEN

Just as well he's not around.

ALICE

Why are you painting those roses?

TWO

The fact is, miss, this here ought to have been a *red* rose tree, and we put in a white one by mistake.

FIVE

And if the Queen was to find it out, we'd all have our heads cut off.

SEVEN

So we're doing our best afore she comes.

ALICE

Can these roses talk?

TWO

No, miss, they're too young yet.

ALICE

I see.

(Looks toward door)

And I see you have a door over here. Is it all right if I try my key?

(Takes key from her pocket)

FIVE

No reason why not.

(They keep busy painting)

ALICE

(Trying the key at door)

Still not the right door!

SEVEN

That there one just leads to our tool shed.

ALICE

I'll just *have* to ask the Queen.

TWO

Please be careful, miss.

FIVE

Be very careful.

SEVEN

When she gets angry-----

(They all moan in unison)

ALICE

But how else can I find the way home?

(Sighs)

(Three SOLDIERS come in L) *R*

SOLDIERS

She comes!

"The queen approaches"

** Do to left of stage*

GARDENERS

The Queen comes!

(They throw themselves flat on their faces. The SOLDIERS march R and stand at attention. The COURTIER and the LADIES come in L and cross to R. After them come the Heart CHILDREN. Other Kings and Queens may be used as desired. The WHITE RABBIT comes in, about to pass ALICE without noticing her)

ALICE

Hello, Mr. Rabbit!

RABBIT

(Hurriedly, in a low voice)

It's a very fine day.

ALICE

Will *you* put in a good word for me?

RABBIT

A very fine day, if I can keep my head.
(Joins the others at R)

ALICE

I wish Chessy were here!

(The KNAVE comes in, followed by the KING and QUEEN of HEARTS. Everybody bows or curtsies. ALICE curtsies, too)

QUEEN

(Pausing with KING at C)

Where's the Duchess?

(The KNAVE bows and smiles)

Idiot!

(To ALICE)

Have you seen her?

ALICE

Not for quite some time, your majesty.

QUEEN

(Screaming)

She's late! Off with----

KING

My dear, if you lose your temper before you eat your tarts, you'll get indigestion.

QUEEN

(Looking at GARDENERS)

Who are *these*?

ALICE

They didn't tell me their names.

QUEEN

Turn them over!

(The KNAVE turns them over)

Get up!

(The GARDENERS jump up and begin
bowing to everybody)

Leave off that! You make me giddy.

ALICE

They didn't mean to, I'm sure.

QUEEN

Everybody tries to annoy me.(Goes to look at rose tree, then speaks
to GARDENERS)What *have* you been doing here?

TWO

(Humbly, down on one knee)

May it please your majesty, we were trying----

QUEEN

I asked for red roses. Red ones! Off with their
heads! *Come to Center*(The GARDENERS run out L. The
SOLDIERS come C and pause)

ALICE

Please, your majesty, everybody makes mistakes.

QUEEN

I don't!

(To SOLDIERS)

What are you waiting for?

SOLDIERS

Their heads are gone, your majesty.

*look left (2), center (2), look right (2)**center (2)*

QUEEN

Then start the game! Courtier, the croquet balls!

COURTIER

Yes, your majesty.

(Goes out R)

QUEEN

Arches, get set!

(The three SOLDIERS bend over and touch the ground, forming arches)

FIRST HEART CHILD

I want to play!

SECOND HEART CHILD

Me, too!

OTHER HEART CHILDREN

Me, too--me, too!

QUEEN

Spoiled brats! Off with----

ALICE

(Shocked)

Oh, no, not your own children!

QUEEN

(To CHILDREN)

Off with you, now. Go take a nap!

(The CHILDREN hurry out R. The COURTIER comes in with large balloons on strings and hands one to each player, including ALICE. The RAB-

BIT goes out R)

ALICE

(Surprised)

You call this a croquet ball?

QUEEN

Certainly. What would *you* call it?

ALICE

(Politely)

A croquet ball, of course. Your majesty, I have a special favor to ask you. I want to get home again by five o'clock, and it must be half past four now.

QUEEN

I don't care if it's midnight.

(Yells)

Fetch the mallets!

(The RABBIT comes in R carrying a broom for each player)

RABBIT

Here they are, your majesty.

(Gives one to each player)

ALICE

Why, this looks exactly like a----

QUEEN

(Sharply)

Like a what?

ALICE

(Quickly)

Like a mallet.

QUEEN

You're not quite as stupid as you look.

KING

I think she's quite a nice child, really.

QUEEN

You! When did *you* start to think?

KING

Excuse me, dear. She *is* peculiar-looking.

QUEEN

(Yelling)

Get to your places! Play!

(She goes first, putting her balloon down and hitting it with the broom so that it goes under an arch)

I win!

ALICE

But the game's just starting!

QUEEN

Then get on with it!

(The players hit the balloons in any direction, not waiting for turns. The DUCHESS hurries in and starts playing. ALICE hits her balloon through an arch. When the QUEEN is about to hit hers again, the SOLDIER gets up and scratches his back)

SOLDIER

My back itches.

QUEEN

Idiot! Off with his head!

KING

But we need him for the game, my dear.

QUEEN

Remind me to have it done later.

*Move into
another
position*

(The SOLDIER makes an arch again. The game continues in wild confusion, with some players dancing around waving their balloons and others approaching the same arch from opposite directions. The QUEEN backs into the COURTIER)

COURTIER

(Bowing)

Excuse me, your majesty.

QUEEN

Off with his head!

(The COURTIER hurries out R)

LADIES

Oh, please, no!

QUEEN

Off with their heads, too!

(The LADIES run out R. The arch SOLDIERS get up and go out after them)

DUCHESS

(To ALICE)

And the moral of that is, "If you don't have two heads, take care of the one you've got."

(Hurries out R. The KNAVE, at L, slips a tart out of his pocket and takes a bite)

ALICE

Is that a cherry tart you're eating?

KNAVE

(Hiding it quickly)

Me? I wasn't eating anything.

(Goes out L)

RABBIT

(To ALICE)

Why are you so interested in cherry tarts?

(Goes out L)

ALICE

I'll feel safer if I stay out of the way.

(Goes U C near wall)

QUEEN

Stop chattering or I can't hit my ball!

(Concentrates on hitting her balloon)

(Now all the other players have gone except ALICE, the KING and the QUEEN. As the QUEEN bends over her balloon, the head of the CAT appears above the wall)

ALICE

Chessy! I've missed you.

CAT

Still watching.

ALICE

She's dreadfully fond of beheading people. The great wonder is that anyone's left!

CAT

How are you getting on?

ALICE

I haven't had any help from the Queen yet. She's too busy with the game.

CAT

Better start thinking for yourself.

ALICE

Everything's so confusing.

CAT

Only if you allow it to confuse you.

KING

(Pausing in his game)

Who's that you're talking to?

QUEEN

(Pausing)

And who gave you permission to talk?

ALICE

This is a friend of mine, Chessy.

KING

I don't like the look of it.

(To QUEEN)

Do you, my dear?

QUEEN

(To CAT)

Idiot! You may kiss my hand.

(Holds out her hand)

CAT

I'd rather not.

KING

Don't be impertinent. And don't look at me like that!

ALICE

I've read in a book that a cat may look at a king.

KING

I'm against it!

(To QUEEN)

What do you think, my dear?

QUEEN

Off with his head!

KING

I'll fetch the Executioner.

(Hurries off L)

ALICE

Oh, no!

QUEEN

Play, play!

(ALICE hits her balloon. The KING comes in L with the EXECUTIONER, who carries his axe. The QUEEN and ALICE go with them to wall)

QUEEN

He has a silly grin.

ALICE

It's a *friendly* grin.

QUEEN
(To EXECUTIONER)

Do your duty.

EXECUTIONER
I can't, your majesty.
(Bows)

QUEEN
Stuff and nonsense!

EXECUTIONER
You can't cut off a head unless there's a body to cut it off from.

KING
Anything that has a head can be beheaded.

EXECUTIONER
I've never had to do such a thing before, and I'd better not begin at *my* time of life.

QUEEN
If something isn't done in less than no time, I'll have *everybody* executed all around.

ALICE
(Stepping in front of wall)
Don't you dare!

(The RABBIT hurries in L)

RABBIT
A terrible thing has happened!

QUEEN
Off with his-----

RABBIT

Somebody has stolen your tarts!

CAT

(To ALICE)

Come quickly!

(His head disappears behind the wall)

QUEEN

(Appalled)

The tarts that I just baked?

KING

(Appalled)

Her cherry tarts?

(While their backs are turned to ALICE,
she hurries to hide behind the wall)

QUEEN

That girl did it!

(Looks around)

Where did she disappear to? After her!

(They hurry out L followed by the RAB-
BIT)

(After a moment ALICE'S head appears
above the wall, and then the CAT'S)

ALICE

She thinks *I* stole them!

CAT

Somebody's head will roll for this!

ALICE

I hope it's not mine!

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene Two

The first part of this scene is played in front of the curtains after a black-out.

LIGHTSON: A couple of irregular rock formations are at C. By one of them the GRYPHON is dozing. The MOCK TURTLE stands near, sighing deeply and wiping tears from his eyes. ALICE comes in L, looking around. After her comes the DUCHESS, hurrying.

DUCHESS

Don't walk so fast.

ALICE

I have to get away from the Queen.

DUCHESS

And the moral of that is, "If there's a way, never mind it."

ALICE

I didn't steal her tarts, and my family must be terribly worried about me.

DUCHESS

Tut, tut! Probably glad to be rid of you.

ALICE

Nothing of the kind. And the moral of that is, "If

you can't say something kind, keep still."

DUCHESS

You're not very good at seeing morals. It takes practice.

ALICE

Why were you late to the Queen's croquet party?

DUCHESS

Because I couldn't stop sneezing. And the moral of that is----

ALICE

"If a sneeze you cannot take, then a sneeze you should not make."

DUCHESS

Yes, yes, of course. Have you met the Mock Turtle yet?

ALICE

I don't have time. It will soon be five o'clock.

DUCHESS

It's what Mock Turtle soup is made from. Say how d'ye do.

ALICE

(Politely, to TURTLE)

How d'ye do.

TURTLE

Mine is a very sad life. Ask me who my friend is.

ALICE

Who is he?

TURTLE

Anyone can see that he's a Gryphon.

ALICE

O-oh.

(Studies the dozing GRYPHON)

DUCHESS

Wake up, lazy thing! The Mock Turtle is going to tell his history.

ALICE

I'm sorry, but I'm in a hurry.

TURTLE

Hurrying won't get you anywhere. So sit down and listen.

ALICE

The Queen's in a very bad mood just now.

GRYPHON

(Sitting up)

You have a point there.

DUCHESS

And the moral of that is, "If you see the point, don't get stuck on it!"

(Goes out R)

GRYPHON

Start telling.

(ALICE sits on or by one of the rock formations and waits. The TURTLE gives a sob)

ALICE

How can you ever finish if you don't begin?

TURTLE

(Sadly)

Once I was a real Turtle.

(Pauses)

ALICE

Thank you, sir, for your interesting history.

(Is about to get up)

TURTLE

When we were little, we went to school in the sea.

(ALICE settles down again)

The master was an old Turtle--we used to call him Tortoise.

ALICE

Why did you call him Tortoise if he wasn't one?

TURTLE

We called him Tortoise because he taught us. Really, you are very dull!

GRYPHON

You ought to be ashamed to ask such a simple question.

(To TURTLE)

Don't be all day about it, old fellow.

TURTLE

Yes, we went to school in the sea, though you may not believe it----

ALICE

I never said I didn't!

TURTLE

You did!

GRYPHON

(To ALICE)

Hold your tongue!

TURTLE

We had the best of educations--in fact, we went to school every day.

ALICE

You couldn't have needed it much, living at the bottom of the sea.

TURTLE

(Sighing)

I couldn't afford to learn it. I only took the regular course.

ALICE

What was that?

TURTLE

Reeling and Writhing, of course, and then the different branches of Arithmetic: Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision.

ALICE

I never heard of Uglification. What is it?

GRYPHON

You know what to beautify is, I suppose?

ALICE

It means to make anything prettier.

GRYPHON

Then if you don't know what to uglify is, you *are* a simpleton.

TURTLE

Then there was Mystery, ancient and modern, with
Seaography. And Drawling, Stretching and Fainting
in Coils.

ALICE

What was that like?

GRYPHON

I hadn't time to learn it. I went to the Classical
master. He was an old crab, *he* was.

TURTLE

Taught Laughing and Grief, they used to say.

ALICE

How many hours a day did you do lessons?

TURTLE

Ten hours the first day, nine the next, and so on.

ALICE

What a curious plan!

GRYPHON

That's the reason they're called lessons. Because
they lessen from day to day.

ALICE

O-oh.

(The TURTLE sobs)

Please don't cry. I'm quite upset, myself.

TURTLE

Would you like to see us do a dance? It's called the
Lobster Quadrille.

ALICE

What sort of dance is it?
(Gets up)

GRYPHON

(Getting up)
First you form a line along the seashore----

TURTLE

(Facing him)
Two lines. You advance twice----

GRYPHON

Each with a lobster as a partner. Change lobsters,
and retire in same order.
(They prance about as they say this)

TURTLE

Then you throw the lobsters as far out to sea as you
can----

GRYPHON

And swim after them!

TURTLE

We can do it without lobsters. Start singing.
(They dance solemnly around ALICE,
reciting in sing-song)

TURTLE and GRYPHON

"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to a
snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's tread-
ing on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all ad-
vance!

They are waiting on the shingle--will you come and join the dance?

(They grab ALICE by the hands and she has to join the dance)

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?"

(They let go her hands and bow)

ALICE

(Relieved)

It's a very interesting dance. What was that part about the whiting? Isn't that a kind of fish?

GRYPHON

It polishes the boots and shoes.

(As ALICE looks surprised)

What are *your* shoes done with?

ALICE

With blacking, I believe.

GRYPHON

Boots and shoes under the sea are done with whiting. Now you know.

ALICE

And what are they made of?

GRYPHON

Soles and eels, of course. Any shrimp could have told you that. Sing her your song now, old fellow.

TURTLE

Sure you want to hear it?

ALICE

The Queen's angry with me, and the only way I can escape is to find a door . . .

(Takes key from her pocket)

TURTLE

You'd *adore* to have me sing? How very nice of you.

(Recites in a sing-song voice, sobbing now and then)

Beautiful Soup, so rich and green,

Waiting in a hot tureen!

Who for such dainties would not stoop?

Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!

Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!

(The GRYPHON joins him on the chorus)

Beau-ootiful Soo-oop!

Beau-ootiful Soo-oop!

Soo-oop of the e-e-evening,

Beautiful, beautiful Soup!

(As they are about to repeat the chorus again the DUCHESS comes in R and the CAT L, and join them. The CAT beckons to ALICE, but she dabs at her eyes with her handkerchief)

OTHERS

Beau-ootiful Soo-oop!

Beau-ootiful Soo-oop!

Soo-oop of the e-e-evening,

Beautiful, beautiful Soup!

(A trumpet fanfare is heard offstage. The RABBIT comes in R dressed as a herald and blowing a trumpet)

RABBIT

The trial's beginning!

ALICE

Trial?

TURTLE

Let's hurry!

GRYPHON

Everybody will be there!

(They go out L, followed by the DUCHESS)

ALICE

What trial?

(Two SOLDIERS come in L and stand on either side of her)

FIRST SOLDIER

Your trial!

SECOND SOLDIER

For stealing the Queen's tarts!

ALICE

(Alarmed)

But I didn't . . . I didn't!

(To CAT)

Help me, Chessy! Help me!

CAT

Remember what I told you!

(Goes out R and in main set goes behind the two high-backed chairs)

FIRST SOLDIER

Come along, miss.

SECOND SOLDIER

We can't keep the Queen waiting.

(The SOLDIERS reach for her arms)

ALICE

(Breaking away)

No, no, no! I didn't do it!

(Runs out R. The SOLDIERS look at each other, then march in step out after her R)

(The curtains part, showing a court-room. The wall, with the lower steps, is UR. Behind it is the low table. The right step is hidden by the curtains, as in Act One, Scene One. At C are two high-backed chairs close together. The white door is UL with a large Heart on it. Chairs are DR for the jury, and DL for others. The KING and QUEEN are seated in the chairs C. The KING wears his crown on top of a white cotton wig. A SOLDIER stands L. The TURTLE and the GRYPHON come in L, go R and take seats with the jury. The DUCHESS follows and does the same. The jury consists of: the CAT-ERPILLAR, FOOTMAN, TWEEDLE-DUM, TWEEDLEDEE, HUMPTY DUMPTY with plaster on his face and his arm in a sling, the GARDENERS --TWO, FIVE, SEVEN--the TURTLE, the GRYPHON, the DUCHESS and the COURTIER. The spectators at L are:

the KNAVE, the COOK, the HATTER,
HARE, DORMOUSE, and perhaps some
LADIES)

QUEEN

(Yelling)

Find her, find her, and be quick about it.

SOLDIER

She ran away, your majesty.

QUEEN

Where did she run?

SOLDIER

Nobody knows that, either.

KING

Maybe she's running in circles, my dear. They al-
ways do.

(ALICE comes running in R. When she
sees where she is, she stops short in
dismay)

QUEEN

Here she is!

(ALICE starts to run out L but a SOL-
DIER steps in front of her, barring the
way. She turns to run out R but the two
SOLDIERS march in and bar her way.
She looks around in panic)

ALICE

Won't *somebody* help me?

QUEEN

See the guilty look on her face!

(The RABBIT comes in R with a large
scroll in his hand)

KING

(To ALICE)

How do you plead?

ALICE

Innocent!

QUEEN

She ate all of my beautiful tarts!

ALICE

No! Oh, please let me go home!

(The SOLDIER at L brings forward a
chair. The other two SOLDIERS close
in on her)

QUEEN

Prisoner, be seated!

ALICE

I won't!

(But the SOLDIERS put her into the
chair)

What's going to happen to me? Chessy, Chessy,
come back!

KING

You'll have a fair trial.

QUEEN

And then we'll find you guilty.

ALICE

That *isn't* fair!

KNAVE

I think it is.

ALICE

There's cherry juice on your face.

KNAVE

(Wiping it off)

Strawberry jam, that's what.

(The jury members write on little pads)

ALICE

What are the jury writing? They can't have anything to put down before the trial's begun.

KNAVE

They're putting down their names so they won't forget them before the end of the trial.

QUEEN

(Looking around)

Where's the Executioner? We can't start without him.

KING

You're right, my dear.

QUEEN

He's late. Off with his----

KING

But if we remove *his* head, then who----

QUEEN

For once *you're* right. Where *is* the Executioner?

RABBIT

Your majesty, I think he's still looking for the Cheshire Cat.

QUEEN

Isn't that Cat's head off yet?

KING

It disappeared.

QUEEN

Somebody had better find it.

FIRST SOLDIER

Now, your majesty?

QUEEN

And be quick about it!

(The two SOLDIERS start L. ALICE jumps up, trying to escape)

Come back! I told you to guard Alice!

(They close in on ALICE again)

SECOND SOLDIER

But your majesty said----

QUEEN

Never mind what I said, do as I said!

SOLDIERS

Yes, your majesty.

(They put ALICE back in chair)

TWEEDLEDUM

I don't think she looks guilty. Nohow.

TWEEDLEDEE

Contrariwise. She looks very guilty.

DUCHESS

And the moral of that is, "Look out for yourself, because nobody else will."

KING

Silence in the court!

TWEEDLEDUM

I don't talk unless I have something to say. Nohow.

TWEEDLEDEE

Contrariwise. You don't say things unless you talk.

KING

(Loudly)

Quiet!

(The EXECUTIONER comes hurrying
in L and bows low)

EXECUTIONER

Please excuse me for being late, your majesties.

QUEEN

Is the Cat's head gone?

EXECUTIONER

All of him is gone, may it please your majesty.

ALICE

Oh, dear, oh, dear!

QUEEN

(Crossly)

It doesn't please me a bit. I think he *helped* Alice steal my tarts.

(The EXECUTIONER goes to stand L of the high chairs)

ALICE

(Getting up)

Nothing of the sort!

QUEEN

Then where is he now?

ALICE

I haven't the faintest idea.

KING

Don't faint in here, or the Queen will take action.

QUEEN

That Cat's getting too smart for his whiskers.

ALICE

He's my friend!

QUEEN

Why did you steal my tarts?

ALICE

I didn't! And now it's almost five o'clock. Oh, my poor mother and daddy, and dear little Dinah! How can I get home again?

QUEEN

You can't.

ALICE

(Upset)

Not . . . ever?

QUEEN

I mean, you can't get any information from me.

KING

We want information from *you*.

ALICE

You refuse to tell me?

QUEEN

Exactly.

ALICE

The Cat was right. He told me to think for myself.

QUEEN

You talk too much.

KING

Sit down. It's time for the trial to begin.

ALICE

(Meekly)

Yes, your majesty.

(Sits down, looking very dejected)

KING

Herald, read the accusation!

(The RABBIT blows three blasts on the trumpet, then unrolls the scroll and reads)

RABBIT

The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts,
All on a summer day;
But Alice came and stole those tarts,
And took them quite away!

KING

Jury, consider your verdict!

RABBIT

Not yet, not yet! There's a great deal to come before that.

KING

Call the first witness.

RABBIT

(After a blast on the trumpet)

The Hatter!

(The HATTER gets up with a cup in one hand and a piece of bread in the other. He goes to stand before the KING and QUEEN)

HATTER

I beg your pardon for bringing these in, but I hadn't quite finished my tea when I was sent for.

KING

You ought to have finished. When did you begin?

HATTER

Fourteenth of March, I *think* it was.

HARE

Fifteenth.

DORMOUSE

Sixteenth.

KING

(To jury)

Write that down.

(They write)

Take off your hat.

HATTER

It isn't mine.

KING

Stolen!

(The jury writes)

HATTER

I keep them to sell, because I'm a hatter. I've none of my own.

QUEEN

Did you see Alice steal my tarts?

HATTER

I was too busy with the Dormouse.

KING

Give your evidence. And don't be nervous or she'll have you executed on the spot.

HATTER

(Shaking)

I'm a poor man, your majesty, and I hadn't begun my tea--not over a week or so--and what with the twinkling of the tea----

KING

The twinkling of *what*?

HATTER

It *began* with the tea.

KING

Of course twinkling begins with a "t." Do you take me for a dunce? Go on.

HATTER

I'm a poor man, and most things twinkled after that
--only the March Hare said----

HARE

I didn't!

HATTER

You did!

HARE

I deny it!

QUEEN

Was it about my tarts?

HATTER

Well, at any rate, the Dormouse said--and after
that I cut some more bread and butter----

KING

But what did the Dormouse say?

HATTER

That I can't remember.

KING

You *must* remember, or the Queen will have you executed.

HATTER

(Getting down on one knee)

I'm a poor man, your majesty----

KING

You're a very poor speaker.

(TWO and FIVE clap)

Suppress those jurors!

(The two SOLDIERS pick up large paper bags and put them over the heads of TWO and FIVE)

ALICE

I've often wondered what "suppressing the noise" meant.

JURORS

S-sh!

KING

(To HATTER)

If that's all you know about it, you may step down.

HATTER

I can't go lower. I'm on the floor as it is.

KING

Then you may sit down.

HATTER

I'd rather finish my tea.

KING

You may go.

(The HATTER hurries out L)

QUEEN

And just take his head off outside.

KING

Later, my dear. Call the next witness.

RABBIT

(After a trumpet blast)

The Cook!

(The COOK comes forward with the pepper can in her hand. She shakes it and everyone sneezes)

KING

Give your evidence.

COOK

No!

RABBIT

Your majesty must cross-examine this witness.

KING

Why?

RABBIT

Because she's a cross one.

KING

Yes, yes, I see.

(Severely)

What are tarts made of?

COOK

Pepper, mostly.

(Shakes can, and they all sneeze)

DUCHESS

And the moral of that is, "A sneeze in time saves nine."

KING

Nine what?

DUCHESS

Don't ask *me*.

KING

You're out of order.

ALICE

In my opinion, there isn't any order.

KING

Don't give your opinion when it isn't asked.

(To COOK)

Your testimony has been a big help.

COOK

Have some more pepper!

(Shakes can again and all sneeze; then
she goes back to her seat)

KING

Next witness!

RABBIT

(After blowing a blast)

Alice!

ALICE

Me?

(Gets up)

KING

Explain why you stole the Queen's tarts.

ALICE

I never even saw them.

KING

Ah, that's very important!

RABBIT

Unimportant, your majesty means.

KING

Unimportant, of course I meant.

(Repeats as if considering)

Important--unimportant--important--unimportant----

(To ALICE)

Did the tarts taste good?

ALICE

I don't know, because I didn't eat any.

KNAVE

They weren't sweet enough.

QUEEN

(Insulted)

I used *plenty* of sugar!

(The jurors write. The RABBIT picks up a piece of folded paper)

KING

(To jury)

Consider your verdict!

RABBIT

More evidence, your majesty. I just picked up this piece of paper.

QUEEN

What's in it?

RABBIT

I haven't unfolded it yet.

QUEEN

It must be a letter written by the prisoner to somebody!

KING

Unless it was written to nobody, which isn't usual, you know.

QUEEN

Who is it addressed to?

RABBIT

There isn't any name.

(Unfolds paper)

In fact, there's nothing on it at all.

ALICE

I didn't write anything to anybody!

QUEEN

A likely story!

ALICE

It's true!

KING

If you didn't sign it, that only makes the matter

worse. You must have meant some mischief, or you'd have signed your name.

(The jurors clap, and the KING bows to the applause)

QUEEN

That *proves* her guilt. So, off with----

ALICE

It proves nothing of the sort!

(Upset)

Oh, Chessy, why aren't you here? Just when I need you most.

KING

That's the most important piece of evidence we've heard yet.

QUEEN

I *knew* that Cat helped her steal the tarts!

ALICE

Will you please listen to me? If there's nothing written on the paper, then there's no meaning to it.

KING

If there's no meaning, that saves a world of trouble
It fits.

QUEEN

What fits?

KING

Have you ever had fits, my dear?

QUEEN

(Angrily)

Never!

(Throws one of her shoes at the jury)

KING

Then it doesn't fit *you*.

(Everybody claps. The QUEEN throws
her other shoe at the spectators)

Let the jury consider their verdict.

QUEEN

No! Sentence first--verdict afterwards!

ALICE

That's wrong!

QUEEN

Hold your tongue!

ALICE

I won't!

KING

(To QUEEN)

She says she won't.

ALICE

This is the most ridiculous trial I ever heard of!

KING

Are you calling me names?

QUEEN

Somebody stole my tarts!

KNAVE

(Jumping up)

Not me!

(Wipes his face again)

KING

Therefore Alice is guilty.

(To jury)

Write that down.

(They write)

ALICE

I'm not!

QUEEN

Guilty! Soldiers, secure the prisoner.

(The SOLDIERS take ALICE by the arm)

Executioner, get ready!

(The EXECUTIONER steps forward, takes his axe from his shoulder, and examines the blade)

ALICE

(Alarmed)

No! Oh, Chessy, Chessy!

(The CAT'S head appears above the two high-backed chairs. He may stand on a box behind the chairs)

CAT

I've been here all the time.

OTHERS

(Excitedly, pointing)

Look!

KING

Where?

(Gets out of his chair to look U C)

QUEEN

(Doing the same)

Now we have both of them! Off with their heads!

EXECUTIONER

(To CAT)

Come down!

ALICE

Stay right where you are!

(Breaks free from the SOLDIERS and
stands near the CAT)

I forbid you to touch him!

KING

(To QUEEN)

She says she forbids us.

QUEEN

Off with her head, off with her head, off with her
head!

ALICE

Stop shouting.

(Looks at them all for a moment, as
understanding grows in her)

I think I'm really *seeing* all of you for the first time.

(They all stand up in their places)

QUEEN

Stop looking!

ALICE

You're not *real* at all. You're only a pack of cards,
and a strong wind would blow you across the meadow!

EXECUTIONER

The wind! It's coming!

(A wind seems to blow from R. The Wonderland people slant toward L as if feeling it)

KING

It's here!

QUEEN

And we're gone!

(Slanting far toward L, everyone but ALICE and the CAT'S head blows out L. Each one carries his own small chair with him as he goes)

CAT

(Coming from behind the chairs)

How right you are!

ALICE

I'm a whole year older than I was yesterday, and I should be smarter. Why did it take me so long to realize?

CAT

You may use your key now. I'm sure you know its name?

ALICE

(Taking key from her pocket)

I think its name must be *understanding*.

CAT

Yes, the key is understanding.

ALICE

But what door will it open?

CAT

As you grow older, understanding will open every door.

ALICE

As I grow older . . .

CAT

Just walk behind that wall near the rabbit hole with the key in your hand, look up, and you'll be back in the land of reality.

ALICE

With my family and Dinah?

CAT

Yes.

ALICE

In time for my birthday party and the cake with the pink icing, and all my friends having fun?

CAT

Yes.

(ALICE walks to wall and stands on step)

ALICE

I'll miss you. Do come with me!

CAT

I can't do that.

ALICE

Please, Chessy!

CAT

In your country I'd be a real cat. I couldn't talk to

you, or go and come as I do now. It's much better for me to be a Wonderland cat.

ALICE

(Disappointed)

Yes, I can understand that. I'm ever so much more grown up than I used to be.

CAT

I knew the time would come.

ALICE

But aren't *you* afraid of the Queen?

CAT

Not the least bit, because she never really executes anyone. We all have fun pretending.

ALICE

I'll be so happy to get home, but I'm glad I came here. Thank you for being my friend and my watch cat.

CAT

Thank you for being *my* friend.

ALICE

Maybe some day I'll come back to see you.

CAT

You can never do that. Once a child leaves Wonderland, there is never a way back.

ALICE

(Thoughtfully)

I'm beginning to understand that, too.

(Steps up on table behind wall and pauses)

Sure you won't come with me?

CAT

Good-by, Alice.

ALICE

Good-by, Chessy. Good-by, Wonderland!

(Goes out R. The CAT goes behind
the chairs again and only his head
can be seen)

CAT

(To audience)

And good-by to you, too!

(His head disappears behind the chairs.
The Grin appears in the air as a shin-
ing curve in the blackout, or held high
on a placard)

Watch out for rabbit holes!

CURTAIN

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play has been designed for the simplest possible staging. No actual scenery is necessary with the exception of one movable door. If practical, divide your stage into two playing areas by the use of a traveler curtain which separates an upstage playing area from a downstage area. This will make the flow of action continuous except for the break between Act One and Act Two. If the traveler (drop curtain is just as effective) is not available at mid-stage, the scenes in front of the curtain may be on the apron of the stage in front of the main curtain. If scenes are played in front of the main curtain, there should be a blackout before the action commences.

A curtain backdrop (or flats of a neutral color) serves as a background throughout the play. The first part of each scene is played in front of the curtains. Prop men (or girls) dressed as Diamonds remove the props as the audience watches.

Shrubbery can be stylized, and painted on separate flats or mounted on stands for quick removal. The wall is a flat painted to look like stone or brick. It has a step at either side and a table behind it for a walking area. The door is a movable flat.

For a larger cast, Soldiers, Courtiers, Ladies, Children and Flowers may be added. The cast may be made smaller by doubling. Most roles can be played by either male or female actors.

Costumes and make-up may be representational rather than realistic. For the animals, use inconspicuous regular clothing, and a cloth cap to cover the hair and ears. Attach appropriate ears to the cap, use a little face make-up such as whiskers, and add a tail. The final result should be, in most cases, an animal wearing human clothing.

For the card characters, use Hearts for the King, Queen, Knave and Children, Clubs for the Soldiers and Executioner, Spades for the Gardeners, and Diamonds for the Courtier, Ladies and Prop Men. These may be painted on large pieces of heavy cardboard that cover both the front and back of the characters. See the Tenniel illustrations for suggestions.

The Flower-Girls may wear pastel colored dresses, with paper petals around their necks. They stand in open cardboard tubs, painted a pretty color, which they can pick up and walk in.

Unusual characters may be handled in any imaginative way. The Caterpillar may be inside pillow cases dyed blue. The Mock Turtle has a painted shell on his back. The Gryphon may wear a mask made from a grocery bag. It is necessary that the Cat have a large head, so that his grin will be large. A round hatbox, painted and with ears, would do. (Be sure it does not muffle the voice.) Optional: The grin of his partly open mouth may be painted with infra-red paint which glows during a blackout when a small infra-red spot is thrown on it. If the infra-red light is not used, the grin is painted on cardboard and held high by rods painted the same color as the backdrop. When the Cat's head appears alone, it may be held high by rods, or merely rest on the edge of a wall or table.

The original John Tenniel illustrations may be consulted for suggestions, but no attempt need be made to duplicate them.

For a shorter play, the first part of Scene Two in Act One, and of Scene One in Act Two are optional. These scenes would then begin with Alice at the mad Tea Party, and at the croquet ground.

PROPERTIES

GENERAL: ACT ONE: Infront of curtain; large painted door, white with red heart on it; portion of wall about four feet high, with steps at each end and low table behind it; pieces of shubbery; small table, key on table. Duchess Scene: Bench, rocking chair, stool, table; paper cups and plates, and plastic utensils, on table. Tea Party Scene: Long table covered with tablecloth reaching to floor; cups, saucers, plates, silverware, for eight or ten people; sugar bowl and creamer, large teapot, chairs, armchair, door with Ace of Clubs on it. ACT TWO: Infront of curtain: Shrubbery, broken rattle under shrub, old-fashioned umbrella, two pillows, two lengths of rope, two household items (such as feather dusters), saucepan, pail, rock formations. Croquet Scene: Portion of wall, rose tree with several white roses on it, door with Ace of Spades on it. Courtroom: Wall, two high-backed chairs, door with heart on it, chairs for jury and spectators, piece of folded paper on ground.

WHITE RABBIT: Fan and white gloves; several brooms; trumpet, large scroll.

ALICE: Handkerchief; key in pocket.

PROP MEN: White door with red diamond on it.

CATERPILLAR: Music pipe.

FROG FOOTMAN: Large envelope sealed with red heart.

COOK: Big pot and ladle, can of pepper.

DUCHESS: Large doll in long dress and bonnet and wearing pig mask; broom.

HUMPTY DUMPTY: Sling for arm, plaster for face.

GARDENERS: Buckets of red paint and paint brushes.

SOLDIERS: Stretcher; two large paper bags.
MAD HATTER: Large watch; cup, piece of bread.
COURTIER: Several large balloons on strings.
KNAVE: Tart in pocket.
EXECUTIONER: Axe.
MEMBERS OF THE JURY: Pads and pencils.

ACT 3 ACT I SCEN. 2 P. 33-44

4 ACT II SCEN. 1 P. 76-84

8 ACT II SCEN. 2 P. 96-100

Alice was trying to get home from Wonderland.

4 ACT II SCEN. 2 P. 97-101

Instead of helping her, Tweedledee and

Tweedledum got in a fight — The Mad

Hatter had a tea party — and even

her friend the Cheshire Cat was

enigmatic—so poor Alice decided

to ask for help from the Red

Queen. The action is fast,

the staging simple, and

the delightful charm

of Lewis Carroll's

great classic is

there to be en-

joyed by all.



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